

# 1<sup>st</sup> Kings:

## Sin Brings the House Down



This will be our eleventh exit as we continue with our journey through Route 66. We are in the historical books of the Bible. Our Scripture reading will be 1 Kings 21:25-28.

I don't know if you have ever traveled to Florida through Tennessee into Georgia. But there are certain geographic regions that even though you travel from state to state, it still looks the same. If there were not a sign around the Chattanooga area telling you that you were leaving Tennessee going into north Georgia, you would absolutely believe you were in the same place. By the time you get to southern Georgia, the landscape has completely changed from northern Georgia. If it were not for that sign that you had been looking for ever since you left home that says you are now entering Florida, you would not know when you left Georgia and were actually in the state of Florida.

We are in the historical books. For the next several weeks, the landscape and the geography is going to look very similar. We have actually left Samuel and are entering into Kings. Please remember, in the Hebrew Bible there was not a division to the two book of Kings. It was just one book. When the Greek translators of the Hebrew Bible put a copy in the famous library at Alexandria, they translated the Bible into Greek and made the division around 250 B.C. When Jerome translated the Bible from Greek into Latin, he followed the Septuagint version and made a division in his Old Testament. Being greatly influenced by the Latin Bible, our English Bible divides Kings into two parts.

## **A Son of David who will Reign Forever**

When we look at 1<sup>st</sup> Kings, I believe the theme is that sin brings down the house. In Samuel, we saw the house of David, yet David's heart was to build a house for God. David could not build that house, so God tells him that one of his sons will. When 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel ends, you and I are looking for a son of David who will build God's house. The book of Kings is going to follow in the pursuit to lead us to look for a coming king who will build God's house. But we need to remember, according to Kings, it will be sin that will ultimately bring down the house.

Kings starts out with Solomon building God's house, so we quickly identify that Solomon must be the son of David that God was talking about in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, chapter 7. By the time we finish the second book of Kings, it ends with another king burning the house of God. While some may interpret history to believe that King Nebuchadnezzar burned the house of God, the writer here wants us to understand that sin ultimately brought down the house of God. That is what we are going to be looking at in our tour of Kings.

### **Scripture**

***"(There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, urged on by Jezebel his wife. He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the LORD drove out before Israel.) When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly. Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: "Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son."***

I think we have so removed ourselves from English history that we sometimes struggle when we think about a man serving as king his entire

life and only being removed by death. Because of our system of government, we usually elect a man to lead our country in his prime. He gets elected to one four year term. If we believe he is fit, we elect him for another term. After those two terms, his leadership in our country ceases. Therefore, most of us see only our leaders in their prime.

As a young man, one of the first men who led our country that I really remembered was a man by the name of Ronald Reagan. Whether you agreed with his politics or not, you have to agree that he was a great leader. As a great leader, we saw him lead this country in his prime and then saw him step down after faithfully serving for two terms. Afterward, he was weakened physically and mentally by a terrible disease. You and I never saw that because his wife was his helpmeet and she protected him. She did not let the reporters in. She did not let the TV people in. She did not let any political people come around him, and he lived out his days of weakness, secluded. Therefore, those of you who saw Ronald Reagan as he led our country will always have a picture of him leading from the perspective of strength, not of weakness.

## **The End of David's Reign**

The Bible opens Kings with David, the shadow of the man he once was, the shell of a man. I want to say, God, why did You have to put these four verses in the Bible? A man, who stood in the valley and faced the mighty giant with a sling and some stones, now can't even get warm! We have a name for that disease, but I cannot pronounce it. Medical science of that time did what they thought best for this malady. The treatment of the day was to warm him. They searched for a young, beautiful woman and brought her to him. She would wrap her arms around him, cuddle him, and would try to give warmth to his body. She would attend to him, yet the Bible says he did not know her. The Bible is trying to say (in "G" rated language) that David is not fit to be king. Even though he is still alive and has the right to sit on the throne, he is not able to lead the country. As soon as news spreads that David didn't 'know' this young, beautiful woman, his oldest living son, Adonijah, steps forward to assert himself as the king of Israel.

After reading Samuel, we are looking for the son of David who will build the house of God. And immediately in Kings, we are introduced to this truth; is it Adonijah? We quickly discover that Adonijah is not the son of David who will build the house of God. Nathan brings word to Bathsheba and tells her she has to go talk to David. Nathan said you know what he has told you. You know that he has told me God has appointed your son, Solomon, to reign in his place when he dies, and now Adonijah has declared himself king and David isn't saying a word! They devise a plan, and when it is hatched, David has publicly stated that Solomon is to reign in his place.

## **The Reign of Solomon**

If we were reading Israel's history for the first time, we would never imagine Solomon being the son who would sit on the throne. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 15:5 is going to say that David always did the will of the Lord, didn't turn from the right or the left, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. We remember Uriah, the Hittite, well, we know his wife, Bathsheba. That sin was so great in the eye of God that there would be division in David's family until his death. Once that little baby in Bathsheba's womb was born, he would forfeit his life because of David's sin. That baby should have never died, because that baby should never have been born, because that baby should never have been conceived, because David should have never done what he did with Bathsheba. It should have been David that died.

Bathsheba gets pregnant a second time, and they called him Solomon. But "the LORD loved him and He sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD." Jedidiah, loved by God, oh, there is a hint! Really? His brother lost his life because of David's sin, and now, out of all of David's sons, he would be chosen to follow David as king and actually begin to build the house of God. Are you kidding me? Solomon sitting on the throne of David is a picture of the grace and mercy of God. How many, who may not ever should have, actually get to, because they don't get justice, they get God's grace?

And now Solomon is sitting on the throne, and God is going to appear to him because he is the king. God appears to him in a dream and He just

asks Solomon, if you could have one request, what would it be? Now this is not one of those Disney cartoons where the genie appears with a little lamp, the person rubs the lamp and out comes the genie, and he gets three wishes. God, in His sovereignty, appears to Solomon when he is sitting on the throne and says, what would you request of Me as your God? Solomon says just give me wisdom to govern and to know right from wrong, because the weight of this thing is too much for me. This thrilled God's heart and He gave him wisdom.

- **The Wisdom of Solomon**

Immediately that wisdom is tested. Two prostitutes had each given birth to a child. One of the children dies in the night and his mother recognizes that life is gone. She exchanges that child for the child of the other woman. When they both wake in the morning, the child that has died is with the other woman, and the woman whose child has died has the baby that is alive. Now moms, you are going to know your baby has been switched. Immediately that lady says this is not my baby, this is your baby. She says no, it is not! Now they are standing before King Solomon. And with the wisdom of God, he just says bring me a sword. We are going to split this child in half; you get one half, you get the other half. Immediately the real mom says no, it is her son, give him to her! The other woman said no, split the child so we can both have a part. It is obvious who the real mother was, right? News of that spread throughout all the land and people (even kings) from far and wide began to come to sit under Solomon's feet and hear his wisdom. This man was so wise, so gifted by God that he wrote three thousand proverbs and one thousand and five psalms...I haven't wrote a one yet! Can you imagine? He ruled a nation, wrote three thousand proverbs, and a thousand five psalms. What did he do in his spare time?

- **Building the Temple**

His wisdom brought him great wealth and he began to lay the foundation stone for the temple. He had the stone quarried at the quarry so that no sound was ever heard where they were actually building the temple. After seven years, a magnificent house for God is built. Thirteen years after

that, Solomon's house was finished. Solomon brings the Ark from its tabernacle, the movable tent, to this permanent location.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:29, he asks, can this house I have built really contain God? If the Heaven and earth can't contain Him, can this house contain Him? This is telling us that there is something bigger going on here than what we are catching. But then Solomon decides this house has been built so all the world would know that He is God and there is none other like Him. Did you hear that? The man who would build the physical house wanted to build it so that all the world would know there is no God like God. But then God breaks into his life. He says that is cool, but I just want you to know that if you don't continue to walk like David walked by following My laws and keeping My Word, this house will fall. And when it falls, the whole world will know who you really are; that you are just like everybody else. You are sinful.

- **God Moves into the Temple**

The glory of the Lord fills the temple! The priests leave, they rush out, and the Shekinah glory cloud fills the temple, signifying that the presence of God is in residence in the house of God. I always loved that story. I get so tickled because today we kind of reverse that. We know when God shows up by how much emotion we all have, how many hands we raise, how much we clap, how much we smile, and how loud we sing. Wow, God was here this morning, amen! When God showed up in the Old Testament, they ran. They fell on their faces before God, saying woe is me for I am coming apart!! God is holy, holy, holy.

The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon and is amazed, not only at his wisdom, but just how blessed everybody is around him. When you have a king who is reigning in righteousness, it affects everyone! As it goes among the king, so it goes among the people.

- **Sin in the House**

Solomon is wise, Solomon is wealthy, then we come to chapter 11, and oh, man...Maybe if there is just one thing we could change about this man's life, here is what we would change: He had seven hundred wives and

princesses, and three hundred concubines. Why did he have so many women? It was because he loved women, foreign women. They caught his eye and he loved them. And you know what his love for women did; it turned his heart from God. The next thing you know, instead of worshipping and serving only Yahweh, the true God of Israel, he had a shrine and a temple to every god of his wives. Solomon began to fall in love with other gods. In my opinion, this is in the Bible because the historian is not writing objective history. He is writing what I call interpretive history.

Now I get aggravated today at interpretive history. There are some TV shows and news programs that I get so aggravated at that I will say, "I am never watching that show again!" They can't just report the facts, they have to put a liberal slant on the facts, and it makes me angry. I will say, "How can someone believe that?" Now, if you are on the other side of that; that is what you do with conservative news. There is no objective history; it is written from either a liberal perspective or a conservative perspective. That is just life.

Now when you pick up the Bible, the historian will say they are not trying to be objective, they are trying to interpret from the lens of how God sees things. But the historian wants us to know that kings do not follow God's laws and they do not listen to God's Word. I mean, Solomon started out so good! How could the wisest man on the planet make the most unwise decisions? But that is what he did. He started well, but he didn't finish well.

As we get through half of this geography called Kings, we see that it is not Adonijah, but neither is it Solomon. Yes, the house physically has been built, but the promise was that the house and the throne would be forever, and you are already getting the picture. This house isn't going to last very long, because it will be the sin of the very man who built the house that will cause the house to start to crumble and fall. Don't pin your hope on Solomon. He is not the true son of David.

- **The Kingdom is Split**

Solomon is going to die, and God already starts to step into the life of a man named Jeroboam. He has been over the forced laborers in the administration of Solomon. Through ten pieces of cloth, God reveals to him that when Solomon dies he will get the ten tribes of the North, for David's sake. Please underline that every time you read that in Kings and Chronicles - for David's sake. And for David's sake, God is going to give one tribe to Solomon's son, Rehoboam, because He made a promise to David.

## **The Reign of Jeroboam and Rehoboam**

God told Jeroboam, if you walk as David walked, if you can control your heart, if you can govern yourself, I will let you govern My people and your house will be forever! Now you talk about a good deal; that is a good deal. But the first thing Jeroboam does as he starts to reign is to decide he can't have people going down to the temple. And so, he makes two calves and declares that these are the calves that brought them out of Egypt. This is what we are going to worship. Are you kidding me?? Do you not remember what happened in the wilderness with the golden calf? He erects these calves and puts one in Dan and one in Bethel, the southernmost part of the kingdom and the northernmost part of the kingdom. He says now you don't have any need to go to Jerusalem, because Bethel and Dan are now the places of worship. He takes men who are not ordained under the law and makes them priests and he creates a new feast.

Let me just say, when it is not going well with the king, it will not go well with the people. As Christians, I hope you will get over that wrong belief that says it really doesn't matter who leads the government. It really doesn't matter who we elect as mayor! It really doesn't matter who we elect as governor! YES, it does. As it goes in leadership, so it goes among the people. And Jeroboam is going to go down in the history of Israel with this epitaph on this tombstone: 'He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and in his sin, he caused Israel to sin.' Every king after him in the northern kingdom did evil in the sight of the Lord, just like Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin! By the time we get to Omri and Ahab, it



gets worse and worse. Yes, it can get worse! Jeroboam is not going to be the son.

We already know Solomon's son, Rehoboam, is not going to be the son, or there wouldn't have been a Jeroboam. During Rehoboam's reign over Judah, Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. In the house of Judah, there would be a ray of hope every once in a while and one king would follow in the footsteps of David, except they would leave a high place, or they would leave the male prostitutes, or some other sin. No king ever so governed his heart that he could really govern the people! We are beginning to understand that if the governor cannot govern his own heart, he is not fit to govern my heart. Kings is trying to tell us that at some point, there must be a king who can step forward and can govern his heart. And in governing his heart, he just might change our heart too. That is the son we are looking of, not a son of David who can change our external circumstances. Your life will not get better just because you get a better job or you get a better wife. No... we need is a king who reigns not from without, but a king who reigns from within. Once that kingdom is established, sin will not bring it down.

- **Elijah**

It is looking bad. The first part of the book is about God and Solomon, and Rehoboam and Jeroboam. But by the time we get to the end of Kings, a man of God is on the scene. His name is Elijah. God provides for him and gives him amazing power. He gets fed by the ravens. A drought he promised starts and he has to leave the creek where he was because the water is gone. He meets a widow who is down to her last ounce of flour and her last cup of oil and he asks for a meal. She says nope, it's reserved for me and my son. We are going to eat and then we are going to die. Talk about the last supper, this was the last supper. Elijah says if you will feed me from that, every time you go to that barrel, it will never be dry. During that whole drought, that barrel never went dry. Her son gets sick and dies and Elijah lays on him and cries out to the Lord and the third time, God puts life back in his body. That lady says what you and I know, this is a man of God.

## The Reign of Ahab

The first thing the man of God does is go to Ahab and tells him there is going to be a drought. You see, Ahab did the unthinkable; he married Jezebel! It is one thing to be Jeroboam, but how would you like to be Ahab? There has never been anybody on the planet who sold himself to do evil like he had. Jezebel brought the worship of Baal into the land. Under Ahab's authority, she killed the prophets of God. The hundred that were left were hidden in caves. Sitting around her table were eight hundred and fifty false prophets. And Elijah said let's see who is really God. I love what the Bible tells us next. Hey, you are going to have to quit limping between God and these gods. You are going to have to make a decision who you serve, so Elijah lets the false prophets go first. They build an altar and put wood on it. Elijah says, now we are not going to light a fire. If our God is really God, He ought to be able to build His own fire. The false prophets start first, calling down fire. Nothing happens and hours pass. Finally, Elijah says hey, it's okay; maybe he is out watching a movie! A little more time passes. Elijah says oh, he is probably in the bathroom relieving himself! It's okay; give him a little more time. Guys, you know it is nap time for the gods, so give him a little more time; maybe he is on vacation. Finally, the people are worn out and Elijah says enough is enough. They rebuild the altar and this time he says let's get some water. They build a trench around the altar and start pouring water in and they soak the altar, so that the trench was full of water. Elijah stood back and asked God to reveal Himself. God revealed Himself. The altar became ablaze. Elijah kills the eight hundred and fifty false prophets of Baal and Asherah. Now, Jezebel is angry with him and he runs like a coward! It is amazing what men will step up to, and it's amazing what men will run from. I mean, that great man of God is now fleeing. And the more he flees and the more Jezebel pursues him, he finally gets to a place where many of you are; God, I'm the only one who is left who is really serving you! Get over yourself! God said to Elijah, I have reserved seven thousand for Myself.

## **The Son of Promise**

Paul will later use this in the book of Romans to say get over yourself; you did not come to Christ on your own. You came to Christ because you are the remnant that has been elected before the foundation of the world, and it is not to your glory, it is to the glory of God!

Ahab married wrong and he lived wrong. Man, did he live wrong! He saw his neighbor's vineyards, wanted it, and couldn't get it because the man wouldn't sell it to him. Jezebel said, aren't you the king? He said yes. She said, why don't you just kill him, then you can have it. They killed him and he took it. Does this remind you of anybody? Man, this is so similar to the story of David it is scary! Except David was a man after God's own heart, and Ahab was a man who had totally sold himself to sinful behavior. Elijah appeared at his door and said you are going to die and your family is going to be wiped out because of what you did. Now guys, watch this! Solomon, who we thought was going to be the son, started well, finished bad. Ahab started really bad; he was really sinful. As a matter of fact, nobody here has done more than he has done, but some of us have been close. When Ahab heard the news, he humbled himself. When he humbled himself, God sent the very prophet who told him his life would be taken and his family wiped out back to him. He said, I've seen him humble himself and I just want you to know I'm going to spare him.

Are you kidding me? Can we be honest? We expect God to spare David. We expect God to be merciful to Solomon. But we don't expect Him, or even want Him to be merciful to Ahab. How many times have you heard of a world event and pray somebody would rot in hell? Wow! Kings is trying to tell us that God desires repentance from all people, and we see it in the most unlikely person, Ahab. That means there is hope for you and there is hope for me. No matter what you have done, there is a King who has dealt with what you did wrong. His name is Jesus and He will change your life because He changes your heart. For whose sake is it? It is not yours; it is for David's sake. And who is the greater David? It is Jesus Christ. Our lives are to be lived for Jesus' sake. No matter where you are, no matter how low you have fallen, there is hope for you in Jesus Christ.